(SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ): (a) Union Minister of Information and Broadcasting had announced in Guwahati that a special package was being envisaged for the North-East Region.

(b) and (c) The said package for North-East Region is under consideration of the Government.

(d) In satellite mode, Doordarshasn programmes are available in the entire country, including North East Region (NER). In the terrestrial mode, TV service is presently estimated to be available to about 81.8% population of North East Region (including the population in fringe areas). The Government is already giving special attention to the broadcasting requirements of the North East Region. There are 31 existing radio stations and 119 TV transmitters (105 of DD-I and 14 of DD-II) for relay of AIR and DD services respectively. For further expansion of AIR/DD coverage for NER, 21 AIR projects, which includes 11 FM transmitters and 10 TV transmitters for DD-I, are under various stages of implementation. A 24-hour North East Channel has commenced since December, 2000. A sum of Rs. 4.46 crores has been allotted in February, 2001 for software development in the North East. It is the constant endeavour of Prasar Bharati to strengthen the network in the North East and to use local talent.

Scheme for education of children engaged in scavenging

*237. SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

whether Government have formulated any scheme to extend financial assistance for education of the children engaged in removing garbage, tanning and other scavenging jobs in the country;

the financial assistance proposed to be extended to each child; and

the number of children who would be covered under this scheme during the year 2000-2001?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL

JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI MANEKA GANDHI): (a) and (b) The Centrally Sponsored Scheme of Pre-Matric Scholarship to the children of those engaged in unclean occupations covers children of scavengers, tanners, flayers and sweepers having traditional link with scavenging. The scheme provides the following financial assistance to the eligible children:—

Hostellers

Class III—VIII	Rs. 200 p.m.
Class IX-X	Rs. 250 p.m.

Day-scholars

Class I—V	Rs. 25 p.m.
Class VI—VIII	Rs. 40 p.m.
Class IX-X	Rs. 50 p.m.

An annual *ad-hoc* grant of Rs. 500 is also admissible to all hostellers and day-scholars.

Besides this, there are additional provisions for students with disability.

(c) During the year 2000-01, the scheme is expected to benefit about 4.41 lakh students.

Benefits from film production after grant of industry status

*238. SHRI KARTAR SINGH DUGGAL: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

whether Government have taken stock of the benefits accruing from film production having been declared as an industry; and

how far the new industry has been freed from the clutches of the underworld and black money and how far it has gone to attract* healthy and progressive talent?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ): (a) and (b) A formal notification declaring "Entertainment Industry including Films" as an approved activity as "industrial concern" under the IDBI Act was